
Environmental Advisory Council
Tuesday, June 28, 2011

The regular meeting of the Environmental Advisory Council was held on the above date for the transaction of general business.

Present –A. Molteni, R. Nieves, B. Jennings, D. Beane

Also present – S. Katzenmoyer, D. Hoag, R. Natale

CALL TO ORDER

Brian Jennings called the meeting to order at 5:40 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Mr. Beane, seconded by Mr. Nieves, to approve the May 24 minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

RAIN BARREL WORKSHOP

Mr. Beane stated that he, Ms. Hoag and Ms. Katzenmoyer have attended several meetings and done research on this subject. He recommended that the EAC wait until next spring to host a workshop. He stated that minimum standards need to be set for proper enforcement.

Ms. Hoag stated that the committee attended a One Stop Shop with the City's trades, fire, and planning professionals. She stated that many potential issues were discovered which need to be addressed. She also stated that rainwater harvesting also affects the City's storm water ordinance.

Ms. Hoag explained that she and Mr. Beane also examined what types of rain collection systems are available for sale and noted that these types are very diverse.

Mr. Beane explained that Reading is not looking at harvesting rain water. He stated that the collection barrel must be marked so that all know that the water is not potable (drinkable). He stated that most municipalities are not regulating rain barrels but are issuing guidelines. He stated that the City would like to

enforce rain barrels so formal regulations are needed. He stated that a template is available.

Ms. Hoag stated that safety was a key concern during the meetings.

Mr. Nieves stated that the Committee was welcome to visit his home to view his set up. He stated that he understands the safety concerns.

Mr. Natale stated that at this time the only issue would be stagnant water.

Ms. Hoag stated that all commercially manufactured rain collection systems have a non-potable warning and all guidelines reviewed suggest a warning label. She stated that Council will ultimately decide on regulations.

Mr. Natale noted the need for minimum standards to enforce the installation and functionality of the barrels. He cited an example that a person could claim that an old, abandoned trash can was a rain barrel to avoid citation for this issue.

Mr. Beane stated that most municipalities' regulations contain abandonment clauses.

Dr. Jennings questioned the ability to set minimum standards and regulations with such broad possibilities. Mr. Beane stated that it would be possible. He stated that if recycled barrels are used, there would be standards for those as well.

Mr. Nieves suggested researching the regulations in Tilden Township since they recently held a rain barrel workshop.

Dr. Jennings supported the EAC's promotion of the use of rain barrels after the regulations are set. Ms. Hoag stated that there is a portion of the City which is not on the City's public water/sewer systems and suggested that this would be an excellent place to begin promotion.

Dr. Jennings questioned the next steps. Mr. Beane stated that the committee will continue their research and begin to develop the regulations.

Mr. Natale stated that he will request regulations from other municipalities at their next joint codes council meeting.

SMART GROWTH ALLIANCE

Mr. Molteni stated that he has been traveling much this summer and noticed that many municipalities are expanding their highway systems but not their mass transit systems. He noted the need for Reading to move the proposed rail system forward.

Ms. Hoag noted the need for continued regional planning. She noted her understanding that Mr. Denbowski was to have researched the City's representation on the Alliance.

Mr. Molteni stated that BARTA has recently announced plans to renovate the former train station on Franklin St. He stated that this will operate as a bus station and be converted to a train station if rail comes back to Reading.

Ms. Hoag stated that this will be a great way to connect rail travelers with the bus service.

EAC SUMMIT PLANNING

No report.

MEETINGS WITH COMMUNITY GROUPS

No report.

BERNHART PARK UPDATE

Ms. Hoag stated that all contracts are now in place and work has begun. She stated that she receives weekly updates and that the contractors have been very cooperative. She stated that EPA has located old photographs showing that there was a beach area between the parking lot and the lake. *Note: this was the area used as a sand volleyball court.* She stated that sample results are not being processed as quickly as necessary and the contractor is searching for another laboratory.

Dr. Jennings questioned if the lack of sample results will slow the process down. Ms. Hoag stated that it would not; it means that more areas will be open as they cannot be restored until the results are received.

Mr. Molteni questioned the removal of trees. Ms. Hoag stated that the trees that were removed were dead and that the City's arborist marked those to be removed.

Ms. Hoag stated that the contractor will be placing wood chips on the slope by Spring Valley Road to cover areas that they cannot remediate the soil due to the proximity to the road. She stated that milled asphalt will be used to pave the parking area. To date, 48 loads of soil have been removed. There is a full-time safety person on-site and DEP has made two site visits and EPA one site visit. She stated that a problem with a stormwater pipe from the nearby development has been identified and the contractor is working with Farino to have that corrected. Wood chips will also be placed along the trail around the lake to guide visitors to stay on the trail. She stated that the project is on schedule with 25% excavation complete.

Dr. Jennings questioned the risks to neighbors during the remediation. Ms. Hoag stated that dust control measures are in place and air monitors have been installed.

Mr. Nieves questioned visiting the site. Ms. Hoag stated that driving by is fine but that no one may enter the site.

Ms. Hoag stated that the final locations for picnic tables and grills are being finalized based on topography after the remediation is complete. She stated that the trail will not fall within the floodplain area but that the bridge over the dam will not be ADA compliant as it is not wide enough.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that she will be on vacation for the next meeting. She suggested that the EAC not meet in July, change the meeting date, or requested a volunteer to keep minutes.

It was decided that there will not be a meeting in July.

FIRST FRIDAY

Mr. Molteni stated that he is unavailable for the July First Friday event. He stated that environmental issues are discussed. He stated that food is available and music is played. He stated that it is from 7 – 10 pm.

No one was available to attend the July event.

Dr. Jennings thanked Mr. Molteni for his work.

FLOODPLAIN ORDINANCE

Ms. Hoag stated that she should be receiving comments on the City's Floodplain Ordinance from DCED. She stated that after the comments are reviewed, work on the update can move forward. She stated that there have been changes to FEMA regulations which may also impact storm water regulations.

RECYCLING

Mr. Molteni noted his understanding that the City will begin collecting recycling. He suggested that the City build a recycling center and charge tipping fees to other municipalities.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

The next meeting of the Environmental Advisory Council will be held on Tuesday, August 23 at 5:30 pm in the Council Office.

Respectfully submitted by
Shelly Katzenmoyer
Deputy City Clerk